



# What Do You Want to Grow?

One of the most fun parts of the garden-planning process is thinking about what you want to grow in your garden this year. Most of us don't have enough room to grow everything we'd like, unless we have a mini-farm! Spend some time strategizing so you can get the most from your garden this season.

Instead of running out to the nursery on the first nice day of spring and throwing plants and seeds into your cart willy-nilly (I've been there!), be more deliberate in your choices this year. Before deciding what to grow, use the following questions to take a closer look at your family's eating habits and what you buy at the grocery store on a regular basis.

# WHAT DO I WANT TO GROW?

What does my family eat and buy from the grocery store on a regular basis?

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Which of these ingredients can I grow for myself?

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What is most important for me to have fresh from my garden?

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What foods taste noticeably better when I grow them myself? (If you don't know, which foods do you enjoy more from the farmers market as opposed to the grocery store?)

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What special varieties do I want that are hard to find?

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Which foods provide the highest value? What's expensive to buy or difficult to find in winter? (Examples: berries, red peppers, broccoli)

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Are there foods that I want to preserve for winter eating? If so, what can I easily preserve? (Examples: tomato sauce, pesto, garlic)

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What's grown well for me in the past? What have I seen growing well in my neighborhood, or received as excess from friends or coworkers?

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What will make me happy to grow in my garden?

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**Next, use your answers to the questions on the previous worksheet to help you choose what vegetables you want to grow in your garden with the My Vegetable List worksheet.**

To get the most bang for your buck, consider prioritizing the vegetables that showed up in your answers.

For example, my answer to question two—*What is most important to me to have fresh from my garden?*—is spinach, herbs, red peppers, and kale. Why? Because I love to eat a spinach salad most nights with dinner and I also use spinach as a main ingredient in my morning smoothie. Herbs are expensive at the grocery store and they spoil quickly, so being able to run out to my garden and snip a few for a recipe saves me so much money throughout the season.

Fresh red peppers are like gold to me! I love having more than we can eat during the summer so I can share them with friends and neighbors. They always feel like such a valuable gift to give! In summer, when it's too hot to grow spinach in my garden, I use massaged kale salads to replace my nightly spinach salad.

Like my answers, think about what you like to eat and the lifestyle you're trying to create when you fill out the worksheet.

Use the checkboxes on the following worksheet to choose what you'd like to grow this season. There are some extra columns if you want to mark down how much you eat per week or if you already know how many plants or feet of the vegetable you want in your garden. If not, don't worry about that right now.

**This is just your first draft. Later in the book we'll be talking about how to narrow down your list. Have fun!**

# MY VEGETABLE LIST

✓	Vegetable	I eat this much per week	I'd like this many plants or feet of this vegetable	Notes (varieties you like, whether you'd like some extra for canning, freezing or giving away)
	Arugula			
	Asparagus			<i>Perennial. Grows best in a separate bed.</i>
	Beans, Fresh			
	Beans, Dry			
	Beets			
	Bok Choy			
	Broccoli			
	Brussels Sprouts			
	Cabbage			
	Carrots			
	Cauliflower			
	Celery			
	Collards			
	Corn			
	Cucumbers			
	Edamame (Soybeans)			
	Eggplant			
	Fennel			
	Garlic			
	Kale			
	Kohlrabi			
	Leeks			
	Lettuce, Head			
	Lettuce, Salad Mix			
	Melons			

✓	Vegetable	I eat this much per week	I'd like this many plants or feet of this vegetable	Notes (varieties you like, whether you'd like some extra for canning, freezing or giving away)
	Okra			
	Onions, Bulb			
	Parsnips			
	Peas			
	Peppers, Sweet			
	Peppers, Hot			
	Potatoes			
	Pumpkins			
	Radishes			
	Raspberries			<i>Perennial. Grows best in a separate bed.</i>
	Rhubarb			<i>Perennial. Grows best in a separate bed.</i>
	Scallions			
	Shallots			
	Spinach			
	Squash, Summer			
	Squash, Winter			
	Strawberries			<i>Perennial. Grows best in a separate bed.</i>
	Sweet Potatoes			
	Swiss Chard			
	Tomatillos			
	Tomatoes, Cherry			
	Tomatoes, Roma			
	Tomatoes, Slicing			
	Turnips			
	Other			
	Other			

## HERBS

✓	Herb	Number of plants desired	Notes (varieties you like, whether you'd like some extra for canning, freezing or giving away)
	Basil		<i>Annual in cold climates</i>
	Cilantro		<i>Annual in cold climates</i>
	Dill		<i>Annual in cold climates, but re-seeds itself</i>
	Garlic Chives		<i>Perennial</i>
	Marjoram		<i>Perennial</i>
	Mint		<i>Perennial</i>
	Onion Chives		<i>Perennial</i>
	Oregano		<i>Perennial</i>
	Parsley		<i>Annual in cold climates</i>
	Rosemary		<i>Perennial, but won't survive winter in cold areas</i>
	Sage		<i>Perennial</i>
	Tarragon		<i>Perennial</i>
	Thyme		<i>Perennial</i>
	Other		

## FLOWERS

✓	Flower	Number of plants desired	Notes
	Rudbeckia		
	Sunflowers		
	Sweet Peas		
	Verbena Bonariensis		
	Zinnias		
	Other		
	Other		
	Other		
	Other		



### SMART TIP

## What will grow in your area?

It's wonderful to imagine millions of us gardeners tending to our own plots of land all over the world! But the truth of world-wide gardening means living in very different climates and zones.

The vegetables listed in the **My Vegetable List** worksheet are the most commonly grown vegetables.

If you live in a very high-altitude location, or the tropics, or a desert, you may need to do some additional research to find out what plants thrive in your location.

The best way to do your research? Talk to other gardeners in your city or town and find out what grows best for them. You could also make some visits to your local farmers' market and observe what the farmers in your area are growing in their fields. Your state university's cooperative extension office may have free articles and publications about growing vegetables in your home state. Here's an example of Wisconsin's website:

<https://learningstore.uwex.edu/>

However you do it, finding out what grows where you live will make your smart garden that much more successful—you'll be working with the environment rather than against it.